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SONGS OF ADORATION
BY GUSTAV DAVIDSON



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*How shall I greet you, beautiful Spring
Morning, who have come to my doorstep
virgin with the odours of the far fields?*

*How shall I greet you, O long-sought and
long-awaited Solace, when my soul, which
should leap up at your coming, languishes
in the nostalgia of imperishable shadows?*

**SONGS OF ADORATION
BY GUSTAV DAVIDSON**

**AUTHOR OF
"MELMOTH THE WANDERER"**



**THE MADRIGAL
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TO M M A

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I-XVIII



SONGS OF ADORATION

I

LET me sit at the feet of thy goodness,
which thou hast gathered in the years
of thy becoming.

Let me learn only from thy lips the beau-
tiful parable of this world, which thou hast
interpreted according to the manner of thine
evolving.

Out of the chaos of my own soul let me
look steadily to the light of thy spirit.

Lead me, who am lost and loitering, unto
the summits of thy grace, thy blessedness,
and thy tranquility.

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II

EVEN in the dawn of my singing, there already shineth upon me the sun of my downgoing.

I mount and look unto the very altitudes; yet whilst the thin air breatheth about me, I know how soon will be the immediacy of my down-climbing.

Thou, singing, look'st only beyond thee towards thy fulfilment. Thou, singing, knowest only ascent towards thy attainment, and goest on in thy faith, unafraid.

But I am weak with hesitations, I am full of misgivings, my faith is constantly assailed.

Yea, darkness descendeth upon me, and I know not the true road.

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III

THOU hast met me in the way of my journeying and hast shown me grace. A string of amber and carnelian beads, so hangeth thy goodness about my neck, so lieth it upon my breast. I walk, and it shineth. I move, and it gloweth. I run, and it sheddeth its lustre all over.

Thy calm floweth unto my very feet, a river of sweet waters. Its purling soundeth in mine ears with a sweet sound; it laveth mine eyes; it cooleth even my noonday thirsting.

Yea, on a day of good-befalling thou camest to me: in my most need and in my farthest lonesomeness. Long didst thou await me on the shores of my destiny, and ever in thy hands were the gathered fruits of thy becoming, even to overflowing.

Unto the path of my on-going and up-climbing didst thou come to deliver me; even unto the summits of my own fulfilment.

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IV

THOU hast touched the heaven and earth
of my soul. Now I am ablaze with
the twin fires of thine enkindling. Now there
dances in me a host of untamable visions
and unforsakable songs.

Yea, like some deep-sea diver didst thou
plunge into my depths. In thy swift and
earliest magnificence, warm with the sum-
mer-heat of life, didst thou burst in upon
me, and like a submerging sun invade my
hidden waters.

Now sorely troubled are the hitherto-still
pools of my spirit, the hitherto slow-flowing
streams of my remoteness. I know not what
maketh me to tremble all over. Only a great
unrest hath taken possession of my heart;
only a sweet sorrow hath hung its jewel-
piece on my breast.

O, thou hast touched the heaven and earth
of my soul, and I am ablaze with the twin
fires of thine enkindling.

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V

THOU failest not in remembrance of me.
Thou keepest in mind my constant need.
Thou givest thought to my alone-being.
Thou dost not forsake me.

Thy goodness endureth to the end. Thy lovingkindness floweth in an unceasing stream. There is no last to thy fair-bestowing.

O, thou makest me to exult. Thou makest me to give praises in song. Thou makest me to utter thy name in many languages, to sound it on many strings.

For thy sake will I purify my ways and walk in the paths of my justification. Thou pointest out the road for my feet to take, and goest before me. And thou leadest me back to the days of mine innocence. Yea, thou makest me to celebrate my renewal.

When I seem to stray, thou arrangest for me a covenant with my forgotten angels. And thou strengthenest my purpose. And thou

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fortifiest my will. And thou teachest direction to my soul.

Without thee, what am I? A house without light, a ship that wandereth on the high waters, a worshipper without faith.

Without thy light what were my darkness? A close-shuttered temple, a night without stars, a groping that knoweth no end.

O, thou failest not in remembrance of me. Thou keepest in mind my constant need. Thou givest thought to my alone-being. Thou dost not forsake me.

SONGS OF ADORATION

VI

SONG dwelleth not in my heart, and my lips make no utterance. Like a fountain that playeth no longer, so is my heart stilled.

My instrument is laid aside, and the strings have ceased their quivering; they know not the touch of my hands, nor the communication of my spirit.

As though turned underground, so runneth now every prompting to music, even back to its source. Unheard are all the wonted harmonies of my conjuring.

Spring cometh arrayed and the earth yieldeth up various scents. The sun spreadeth his radiance before mine eyes, the trees whisper about me, the dew falleth upon the ground, twilight descendeth.

I walk in the paths of my justification and in the ways of my on-going. I do not stray from the right road. I do not linger by the wayside.

Yet only as a wind striketh the surface of the waters and maketh it to tremble, leaving calm all the spaces beneath, even in such manner am I moved. My heart, deep down,

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leapeth not in answer. My lips give forth no sound.

I know not the interpretation of my own want, nor the depths of my stillness. My own sorrow I possess not, nor the joy of its telling.

The springs of my delight are sealed; the wells of my utterance. Like a fountain that playeth no longer, so is my heart stilled.

SONGS OF ADORATION

VII

I will seek out a place for myself in the midst of the city and sit still, with my hands folded. It will not trouble me to see the whole world busy with its thousand cares, for I will not heed it. With my hands folded I will sit still and meditate upon thee.

Oh, they will come to me and say, How can you sit there doing nothing? They will run to me and cry, Do you not see there are a thousand things to be accomplished ere the day is done and yet you have not stirred?

To this I will have no answer ready. I will bear patiently their reproaches and make no reply. Because they may not understand, why should I grieve them with a single word? To me it will merely seem that there is no need for hastening. All my life I have hastened, and what have I accomplished? All my years I have spent in pursuit of the next moment fleeting—and when have I found it?

No, I will seek out a place for myself in the midst of the city, and meditate upon thee with folded hands.

SONGS OF ADORATION

VIII

You have given me cause to sing, and though my heart is without motive, I will not hesitate to make songs out of my own rejoicing.

Because you are the subject of my adoration, it seems to me that the whole world must put aside its cares and listen to my singing.

I will take my flute in my hands and play upon it. And my music will be of the new-born day which the sun has brought as a gift to the earth this beautiful, glad morning. But I will really be thinking of one who has given me to know the gladness of my own awakéning.

I will sing of the freshness of April fields and the buoyancy of all things that surround me. But I will have ever before me the image of one who has set Spring in my own heart.

They will hearken, my listeners, and look to the east and to the west to see the things whereof my song makes mention; but they will not know that the thing I have left un-

SONGS OF ADORATION

spoken—it is that which gives such magic to my flute.

And when I have praised all the visible sights of the earth, and my listeners have departed, I shall still be singing.

And when I have extolled the oncoming stars till they too wane from the heavens, dawn will find me on the hills with my flute still in my hands.

For you, who have risen never to wane, have given me cause for singing, and out of the joy that is mine through your bestowing, I will scatter music into the heart of all the world.

SONGS OF ADORATION

IX

I WILL set thy name above all others in my heart, for thou art my salvation.

Therefore will I make songs unto thee without ceasing, and never weary of extolling thy goodness all the day long.

I will establish thy worth broadcast, in the dark and light places of the land, and cause thy name to be remembered through many generations.

For I was in distress, and called upon thee out of my distress, and thou didst answer me. I appeared before thee empty-handed, and thou wast not wroth; but thou didst receive me with willing arms and open countenance. Even when I came to thy door, thou didst not turn away. Even when thou sawest my need, thou didst not forsake me. Rather, thou took'st me closer to thy bosom and gavest me full comfort.

Truly thou art my good, and my help, and my deliverer out of darkness. In thy strength will I take refuge; in thy sanctuary.

Oh, how will it be with me when thou art no longer near—when thou standest at a distance?

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In thy presence my heart breatheth in the sun; and when thou art away from me, my soul seizeth upon its stars. But when thou shalt be altogether removed from me, what shall I do?

Because of thy goodness, song welleth in me like a river that riseth and overfloweth its banks; like a water-spill that hurrieth down the mountainside and becometh a torrent.

Thou art ever with me, by night and by day. I hear thy footsteps on the cool pavilions of my solitudes; thou companionest me in my lonesomest hours.

I will set thy name above all others in my heart, for thou art my salvation.

SONGS OF ADORATION

X

BECAUSE thou hast brought me the gifts
of thy singing, my heart breaketh with
pride.

With the jewels of thy Houses of Dreams
thou weightest down my hands, and now I
am crowned.

In the twilight, when I come home from
my tasks, I take thy songs in my hands and
carry them to a chamber of silence. And
there I meditate upon them, full of love and
reverence, because they are the gathered fruits
of thy life, in thy becoming.

But when thou turnest to me and breath-
est upon me thy song, I know it is too great
an honor to be endured, and my heart shat-
ters itself into a thousand fragments at thy
feet.

SONGS OF ADORATION

XI

THERE is weariness in my heart for the songs I have not sung to you.

Full of the longing to give of my thoughts in my most perfect words, yet ever am I cast down because my lips utter only the merest fragments and the most pitiable imperfections. My heart yearns to give of its fulness in joy and pain, and I am faint with useless striving.

Because, in my impatience, I cannot convey to you at once all the music that is in my soul, I am seized with conflicting torments. I know you are unmoved by my singing—therefore I cannot endure my own creations.

When the day is done and I wend my way home from my tasks, I love to think that you are there, at the end of the road, awaiting me; that your heart, free and at-

SONGS OF ADORATION

tuned, is a-tremble with expectation of my singing.

I love to think that each day, as I come to you, I bear in my own heart a song in its uttermost perfection.

But my dreams are as bubbles on the bursting foam, and more than ever do my unsatisfied longings weigh down upon me like the spread wings of gaunt and terrible birds.

Oh, I shall become so bitter with myself at last that I shall create, out of my deepest anguish, the most beautiful song of all; and then you, who have hitherto stood inaccessible of my singing, will crown me with your tears.

SONGS OF ADORATION

XII

You who have taught me reverence and
pointed the way to my pride—

As when you said, because I strove so
hard: "You need not sing—I know, I under-
stand." And caused my songs to overflow the
more.

As when you wrote: "Who in my hour
of need brought me your own young thirst-
ing soul to feed." And set the torches flaming
in my heart.

And once you took my hand within your
palms, smoothing it gently.

And once you placed your own white, pray-
erful fingers on my head—

You who have taught me reverence and
pointed the way to my pride.

SONGS OF ADORATION

XIII

WHEN the gold of my life is scattered in the dust and the hope of the world is no more with me, then like a little child with outstretched hands will I run to you, craving the tenderness which will rightfully be mine. For I will be as a little child wanting its mother.

I will come to you, knowing nothing. And you will take me on your knees and fold me lovingly in your arms. With tales out of fairyland you will soothe my mind, and with old remembered tunes, sing me to sleep.

At times my eyes will grow eloquent with visions that your words will unfold for me; at times my heart will grow wistful in the recollections of far-away years. And when, after a while, my mind will have drifted away in the tide of your own imaginings, I will cease to listen and my eyes will be closed.

You will give me back the gold of my life and open up again the door of my dreams.

SONGS OF ADORATION

You will honor and crown me anew as I stand disinherited before you.

When the grey of the world has touched the colors of my soul, and I am utterly without longing, I will run to you with outstretched hands, like a little child, calling its mother.

SONGS OF ADORATION

XIV

OH, what has been prepared for my heart which knoweth not whether to sorrow or to rejoice? Which is weighted down with many presentiments and feeleth the hold of an unmentionable fear upon it?

Oh, let it be given my heart to have cause to rejoice. Let it be given my heart to fold itself again in the love of many things, to be exuberant with courage and thanksgiving towards the whole world.

Oh, there is something already unalterably written in the heavens, and the pulses of my heart are slow-moving, like the drag of ponderous chains.

What has been prepared for my heart which knoweth not whether to sorrow or to rejoice?

SONGS OF ADORATION

XV

IN THE days of my promise, O woman, the grace of your favor lay with sweet weight upon my soul.

Then, when I sang, though my song was imperfect and faltering, you listened with pride to my singing, and your heart trembled, as with a deep expectation.

Now, in my fulfilment, you have forsaken me.

Now, when I sing, and the melodies flow unhindered from my soul, and utter forth the whole of my longings perfect as song can convey them, you turn away and are silent. I lay the full fruits of my efforts humbly within your lap and you accept them not!

Oh, have I made friends of all the world with my singing that you should forsake me?

In the days of my promise the grace of your favor lay with sweet weight upon my soul.

Now, in my fulfilment, you have forsaken me.

SONGS OF ADORATION

XVI

JUBILANT were my feet in the days of my adoration.

Then, ere ever thou hadst uttered the word,
I knew that thy summons had sounded.

Thy heart need only have called—I heard,
and with pace undiminishing sped to thy side.

Jubilant were my feet in the days of my adoration.

But now, when thou sayest “Come!” my heart pondereth the enigmatic word. Fain are my feet to fly, yet irresolute I stand, debating thy true intent.

Once I could know ere thou hadst uttered the word.

Now, when thou sayest “Come!” my heart, misgiving, knoweth not which way to turn.

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XVII

THE temple is dark on the hillside and the
snows have descended the mountains.

I stand in the midst of my wayfaring and
know not whither the road leads.

The temple is dark on the hillside and
night is adrift in the valleys.

Indistinct is the land that surrounds me,
and I hear not the call of thy summons.

The torrents surge white in my pathway,
and I hear not the sound of thy footsteps.

Only the murmur of voices in the pulse
of remembered springtides.

Only the winds blowing chill on the years
that have waded between us.

I stand in the midst of my wayfaring and
know not whither the road leads.

The temple is dark on the hillside and night
is adrift in the valleys.

SONGS OF ADORATION

XVIII

THE vesper lamps are lit, and thou hast entered the temple.

Before the altar thou kneelst, and thy heart is solemn with offerings.

Before the altar, in prayer, attending the sound of my footsteps.

Worshipful I come, as of old, though long on the highway I tarried.

The road was steep, and the rapids surged ever more darkling before me.

Worshipful, as of old, with wreaths to encircle thy forehead!

Through open meadow and upland, through perilous wild-glen and forest,

I come remembering the law in the days of our hearts' intercession:

Remembering the songs that were wrought

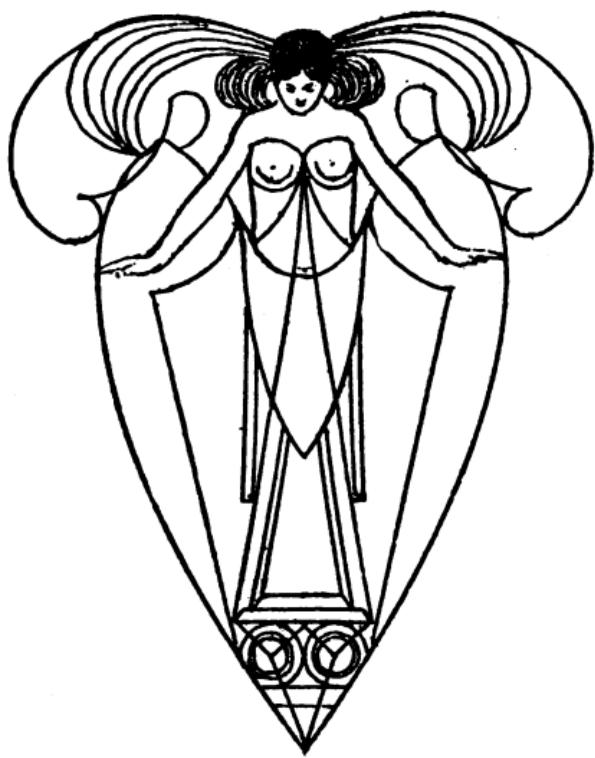
S O N G S O F A D O R A T I O N

**when Spring still moved through the down-
lands!**

**The vesper lamps are lit, and thou hast
entered the temple.**

**I come, though the dusk is fallen, and the
years are adrift in my spirit!**

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